

August 19, 1955

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HIM

I am planning to take off a week before seeing you at our forthcoming meeting. There are several questions which have come up that would be very valuable for you to look into before we get together at that time.

Our subcontractor is preparing an expansion of their proposal on ground handling in an attempt to clarify the problem of which items we should continue on and which we should not. I am afraid that with this expanded discussion it will rest upon you to make the decision as to what we should provide in the way of ground support equipment. I would very strongly suggest that we try to get together either on the 29th or 1st with [] and RHP in an attempt to get this problem worked out. We are proceeding only on those things which we deem vitally necessary for the test operation but time is clipping along and we must start to work on the others. The letter of intent is very ambiguous and we should try to clarify it. I have not received any word as to how preparations at the site are proceeding but we will be there shortly and can reconnoiter on the spot.

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On the 24th of May we received a request to expedite the delivery of A-2 from 1 November to 15 August. An extended work week both in engineering and in shop was immediately placed into effect with the anticipation that this increased effort would continue through September, since the additional configurations were advanced on the schedule by nearly the same amount. I would now like to report that although this activity was successful in hurrying us to meet a greatly accelerated schedule on A-2 it has produced a regrettable slippage in the schedule of B. The purpose of my including this note is to advise you of the existence of this extended work week and to request that the overtime costs be recognized as acceptable costs.

At a meeting on August 9 the vehicle schedule was thoroughly examined and we were informed that the August 15 date was no longer realistic. The highly accelerated overtime activity was brought to a halt at the end of that week and a more normal program continued with emphasis returning to B in an attempt to get it back on schedule. It is now my opinion that the optics for B will prove to be the schedule limiting factor. We have not received the information which we require to modify the prototype lens. The large mirror and the windows have been made and delivered. Things are sufficiently far along on A-2 that it is now planned to have at the test site on September 1 the first A-1 and the first A-2.

The charting camera has been^{as} thoroughly tested on the ground as our ingenuity will permit, and appears to be satisfactory in every respect we can check. Actual in-use performance is going to be very educational. The unit we have is a prototype and should be considered as such. While its performance is completely representative of the production unit, it is recognized as being over-weight and unfinished with regard to painting and other surface treatments. I will show you some pictures when I see you and I am sure you will agree that the designer and the manufacturer have done a very fine job in the time which was available.

The drift sight is not in quite such a happy position since in the final stages of assembly we discovered a design error in some gearing. One would think that with our experience we would not have stubbed our toe on such a simple problem but this went through us all - from draftsman up to myself, and none of us caught the blunder. I suspect we were all looking at the more subtle aspects of this 229

CONTAINS SENSITIVE
 COMPARTMENTED INFORMATION

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problem and let a simple thing slip. In any case, we are hard at work rectifying the difficulty which turns out to be not too complex, and the drift sight will be available on the currently scheduled date for a practical installation. Here again we will have a great deal to learn from some experience with this new approach to an old problem.

One of the disappointments of my life is the fact that I will never be in a position to personally look through this instrument and evaluate its performance under conditions of actual use. This is a sufficiently serious point with me that I wonder if it would be worth our discussing a modification to some other aircraft for a test installation where some of us who are experienced in the limits of optics could have a chance to acquire some education on this instrument.

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I believe I once told you that customer-furnished items were pretty well complete but in going over the lists we have discovered that a quantity of forty K-38 shutter assemblies, Stock No. 8400-789835, are still required. The above items are located at Hill Air Force Base, Ogden, Utah, and it is estimated that this quantity would make up into a shipment of about 400 lbs and 50 cu. ft. Delivery is required prior to September 15.

Under our contract provision for the Buy American Act, we wish to request a deviation or waiver for the purchase of watch assemblies from R. P. Gallien Company of Los Angeles. The watch movements available in this country, because of size and face details, could not be utilized for our purposes without rather extensive reworking either by the manufacturer or by the user. A watch movement manufactured by A. Schild in Switzerland and distributed by the R. P. Gallien Company was found to be satisfactory without rework and so is to be obtained for our equipment.

I have received adequate studies for our forthcoming test program and have looked into the planning for personnel sufficiently to ensure that the program will get under way as scheduled. Besides my attendance at our meeting, I expect to be on the spot from the 13th of September until the 28th to lend whatever support I can to the opening events.

I have heard some disquieting rumors about the possibility of your having less time to spend guiding our efforts than has been the case in the past. This would be a most unfortunate state of affairs for we have all felt the stabilizing influence which you have exerted. If the worst is inevitable and the press of other business forces you to direct your attentions elsewhere, we would greatly appreciate an indication as to whom we should approach for decisions in those areas which cross the boundaries of presently defined areas of responsibility.

I am looking forward to seeing you again on the 30th.

R. M. S.